



## Fulton Corridor Specific Plan Community Advisory Committee

Meeting Location: Fresno City Hall, City Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street, Fresno, CA 93721

### ***MEETING MINUTES***

**Tuesday, October 18, 2011**

#### **Commission Members Present:**

Alan Allen (Chair), Rosemarie Amaral, Donavan Byrn, James J. Connell, Raul De Alba, Morgan Doizaki, Victoria Gonzales, James Haron, Eric A. Kalkowski, Nancy Marquez, Polly Parenti, Timothy Schulz, Cliff Tutelian, Maribel Vera-Anaya, Brent Weiner

#### **Commission Alternates Present:**

Jan Minami, Beth Paz

#### **Members Not Present:**

Joyce Aiken, Roger Palomino, Nancy Ayala, Evan Hammer, Jr., Gary LanFranco, Allysun Williams

#### **Downtown and Community Revitalization Staff:** Craig Scharton, Assistant Director

Elliott Balch, Downtown Revitalization Manager

Wilma Quan, Urban Planning Specialist

Mayor Ashley Swearengin was also present.

**Consultants:**

Stefanos Polyzoides, Juan Gomez-Novy — Moule & Polyzoides (MPA)

Diana Asami, Recording Secretary

**1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Chair Alan Allen called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. and called roll.

**2. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION**

Mayor Ashley Swearengin welcomed the committee, described the importance of the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan, and gave a presentation on options for the Fulton Mall, including the Administration's preferred alternative for purposes of the environmental review, Option 2.

**3. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

**A. Agenda Approval**

Chair Alan Allen called for approval of the agenda for the meeting. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Victoria Gonzales and seconded by Donavan Byrn; the motion was carried unanimously (m/s/c/ 15 yes, 0 no).

**B. Approval of minutes for the October 19, 2010 Regular Meeting**

Chair Alan Allen called for approval of minutes of the October 19, 2010 Regular Meeting. A change was made to the second full paragraph on page 15, from "caulis of mixed-use of retail businesses" to "catalyst of mixed-use retail businesses." A motion to approve the minutes was then made by Rosemarie Amaral, seconded by Raul De Alba; the motion was carried unanimously (m/s/c/ 15 yes, 0 no).

**C. Approval of minutes for the September 14, 2010 Regular Meeting**

Chair Alan Allen called for approval of minutes from the September 14, 2010 Regular Meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Victoria Gonzales, seconded by Brent Weiner; the motion was carried unanimously (m/s/c/ 15 yes, 0 no).

#### **D. Discussion of Community Advisory Committee Member Roles**

City staff outlined the role of the Committee in making a recommendation to the Planning Director on initiation of the draft plan. Staff advised the committee that the recommendation would need to come within the four scheduled meetings, and that action to make a recommendation would begin to appear on the agenda beginning at the next meeting.

#### **IV. CONSULTANT TEAM'S SUMMARY OF FULTON CORRIDOR SPECIFIC PLAN PUBLIC DRAFT REPORT – MPA, INCLUDING CAC AND PUBLIC INPUT**

Stefanos Polyzoides of Moule & Polyzoides gave an outline of the process of putting together the FCSP, stating it was now in the fourth of six stages, the Specific Plan Preparation; that the statement of the Plan's purpose came from the workshop that occurred in the fall of 2010, which had resulted in a list of 10 of the most important items, including in-fill of development and mix of land use.

Stefanos Polyzoides pointed out that the Plan is not a one size fits all plan, but that it allows that different districts need different accommodations and design:

- Chapter 3, *Plan Framework and Goals*, refers to the core of downtown, with its mix of residential, office and retail and developmental potential;
- Chapter 4, *The Fulton Mall*, covers Mall issues, and outlines the three options for the Mall, as described earlier in greater detail by Swearingin;
- Chapter 5, *Priority Development Projects*, lists four priorities of developmental projects: (1) revitalization of the Fulton Mall and the Mariposa Plaza; (2) development of the northern end of the Mall; (3) development of the southern end of the Mall; and (4) building the high-speed rail station;
- Chapter 6, *Building & Development*, lists nine strategies for development that stresses each zone's unique character and takes into consideration its legal dimensions;
- Chapter 7, *Historic Preservation*, discusses five preservation strategies and provides strong policies;
- Chapter 8, *Public Realm*, discusses five strategies for the future development of Downtown's public realm, the open space for parks and schools, taking into account access to the high speed rail station and a priority overlay plan for some streets;
- Chapter 9, *Transportation*, discusses the entire street network, serving pedestrians, cars, bicycles, and other modes, and the associated street types;

- Chapter 10, *Sustainability, Infrastructure & Resources*, discusses the need for upgrading the utility infrastructure of Downtown; and
- Chapter 11 covers Implementation.

Polyzoides added that Downtown represents an untapped value for Fresno, and touched on funding and financing, goals, and programs.

Chair Alan Allen thanked the Consultant and opened the meeting to the Committee for questions.

Cliff Tutelian stated that in the three options presented for the Fulton Mall in the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan there is a significant difference with respect to the end results in vacancy and income generated, although the costs are not that far apart. He asked whether over the next four meetings the Committee would have the opportunity to select only one from the three options, as drawn, whether it was possible to craft something in between for maximum benefit or there was a preferred option. Elliott Balch responded that the Committee is not being asked to select further from among the options for the Mall; that it was common to enter an environmental review phase with a preferred option, which the Administration had chosen as Option 2 from among the three options favored by the Committee a year ago; that during the EIR, technical experts can determine whether other alternatives need study in order to mitigate the impacts identified from the preferred alternative. Stefanos Polyzoides stated the hybrid options had basically been eliminated earlier in the process. He added that the numbers in the FCSP were not yet precise and the information was raw; that they were not to be taken as final.

Cliff Tutelian pointed out that in Table 4.5A in Chapter 4 of the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan, *The Fulton Mall*, showed the vacancy rate for Option 2 to be 15%, versus 9% for Option 1, and asked whether, in the final design, the Plan could be made to push for lower vacancies by changing design aspects of the adopted future for the Mall. Elliott Balch stated that implementation details would inevitably need to be fleshed out, and could be as long as impacts stay the same as what is reviewed,. Chair Alan Allen added that the second option was a partial blend of options favoring change and preservation.

Donavan Byrn asked whether effort was going to be made during the construction of the Fulton Mall project to avoid putting the existing businesses out of businesses. Stefanos Polyzoides responded that those efforts always took place and are typical of such a project. Elliott Balch stated that the Public Works Department had already been asking questions regarding the impact of such a project on the surrounding businesses. Mayor Ashley Swearengin commented that though it took two or three budget cycles to raise the money for the Fresno Mall project, the City would not stretch the construction out; once it was started, they wanted it to go quickly. Stefanos Polyzoides stated the project would be done in phases, one side to another.

Craig Scharton commented that the Property and Business Improvement District (PBID) would be in an ideal place to provide training for existing businesses to prepare for the increase in business that resulted from the FCSP project; these programs were meant to

help businesses with such things as window displays, customer service, and all the necessary skills to be in the best possible position to benefit from the project.

Morgan Doizaki asked when the EIR report would be finished. Stefanos Polyzoides responded it would be ready for review in spring of 2012, as noted in the schedule.

Chair Alan Allen asked for comments from the public, asking each public member to give their name and address and requesting each speaker be limited to two minutes. A motion to limit the speakers to two minutes was made by Polly Parenti and seconded by Rosemarie Amaral; the motion carried unanimously (m/s/c/ 15 yes, 0 no).

## **B. Community Input/Question and Answer**

Eldon Daetweiler, 251 W. Los Altos, Fresno, CA, stated he felt the Plan looked fantastic, but was concerned about the numbers contained in it, such as the sales projections and the numbers in general, and wondered where they came from. He stated that Option 1 had \$1 million and option 2 stated \$1 million, but that Option 3 listed \$16 million; and stated that though historically he was very in favor of restoring downtown, he felt perhaps the Plan may not be as careful as it should be with such a discrepancy.

Johnny (last name not given), 1674 E. Roberts, Fresno, CA, a member of Occupy Fresno, stated he was greatly in favor of having downtown fully restored, particularly the Fulton Mall, feeling that the current state of the Mall is damaging to Downtown. He is in favor of a hybrid of the plans portrayed in the FCSP to maximize benefits.

Doug Richert, 1458 W. Chennault, Fresno, CA, thanked the Committee for its work on the Plan and is in favor of keeping the Mall. In his opinion, the Mall is being made the cause of the Downtown problems rather than admitting that its problems are a symptom of other things: growth of Fresno to the north, loss of blue collar jobs, and its multistory buildings. He feels the City is being disingenuous about saving the existing businesses and that there are actually businesses on the Mall that it does not want to save. He suggested the Committee should study the figures in the Plan more, should ask for a track record from the consultants, and should look into the costs of the three options, because it should cost more to renovate than to remove.

Resindo, 1331 "N" Street, Fresno, CA, feels that restoring the Fulton Mall would be great, but asked whether the figures in the Plan were based on today's economy, which may get worse before it gets better.

Dianne Hanzlicek discussed desiring to keep those that are employed in the downtown area down there, but pointed out parking continues to be a huge problem. She is interested to know how the new Downtown Development Code would affect the Plan and how it will be implemented.

## **V. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Craig Scharton expressed appreciation for the Committee's hard work. He made closing comments, stating that next few weeks' discussions would hem in the Plan, making a good plan a great plan; that everyone's participation would be needed during the meetings over

the next three weeks to be sure all the edges were rounded before the Committee sends the Plan to the Planning Director to begin the Environmental Impact Review.

Nancy Marquez asked Craig Scharton what changes he had noticed over the last few months as a frequent visitor to the Mall; he responded he had seen great improvements in cleanliness, in the condition of the fountains, and in the cleaning up of the artwork. He then mentioned that the newest investor in the Mall, the owner of the Security Bank Building, was present during this meeting. Chair Alan Allen interjected that he had never seen the mall look better than it had over the last few months.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Chair Alan Allen announced the next meeting on Tuesday, October 25, 2011, at 3:00 .m.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.